REMARKS

In a communication mailed February 25, 2004, claims 1 and 3-21 were examined and were rejected. In response Applicants have amended claims 1, 3-7 and 9-21, added a new independent claim 25 and canceled claim 8. No additional fees are believed owed as a result of this communication because both the remaining total number of claims and the number of independent claims do not exceed the fees for such claims previously paid due to the previous cancellation of claims.

Claims 1 and 3-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Bonora et al. (U.S. Patent 5,570,990) or Maney et al. (U.S. Patent 5,166,884). In response independent claim 1 is herein amended to recite a method for using an electronic device that uses "second data to modify said lithography mask by changing exposure properties of the lithography mask". Alternatively or in combination the recited second data may be used "to perform an action that removes said lithography mask from further processing". Yet alternatively or in combination, the second data may be used "for testing and measuring properties of said lithography mask". Support for the claim amendments, including claim 1, may be found, for example, at pages 8 and 10, lines 3-13 and elsewhere.

Bonora et al. disclose a human guided mobile loader stocker to mechanically assist with container movement. As stated at Col. 3, lines 53-59, the stocker could include a processor and a memory for communication to a station to determine if a specific pod should be placed on that station. Additionally, as stated in the Abstract, the processor is used for inventory control and container movement

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guidance. The processor and memory are not used to affect parameters of subsequent processing associated with a station. Such enhanced functionality as recited in amended method claim 1 is not suggested by Bonora et al. or made obvious by the processor and memory taught by Bonora et al. For example, Bonora et al. do not teach or suggest "using the second data to perform an action that removes said lithography mask from all further processing". The Bonora et al. processor and memory is taught to determine when a specific pod is to be processed by a specific station by determining if a specific pod should be placed on a specific station. Such determination does not remove the pod from all further processing. Applicants' system provides an enhanced manufacturing system from the Bonora et al. system by preventing continued processing of specific product, such as a lithography mask determined prior to complete processing to be defective.

Maney et al. disclose a container for carrying wafers with a memory for storing the identity, status and history of the articles. None of this information would provide any more information about a wafer than the present point of production a specific wafer is at (e.g. wafter # X has been through specific steps and is presently at a specific point of processing). As recited in amended claim 1, the present system provides enhanced processing automation by reciting a method for using an electronic device that either uses "second data to modify said lithography mask by changing exposure properties of the lithography mask", uses "second data to perform an action that removes said lithography mask from all further processing" or uses second data for "testing and measuring properties of said lithography mask". In Applicants' system, the recited second data that is

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generated is used by a subsequent processing station to affect the subsequent process.
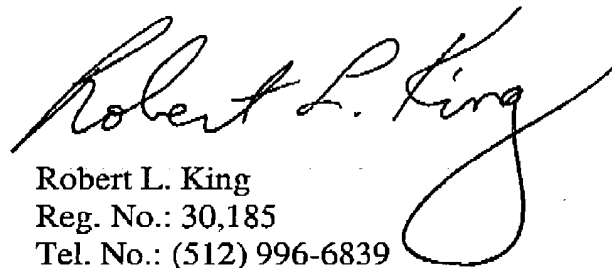
Saka et al. disclose a production system in which a memory is attached to a product. As detailed from Col. 8 through Col. 9 therein, six features are discussed. Information is communicated with the product memory regarding product ID, product history, progress of processes or goods, defect information regarding a faulty machine, automatic stocking is implemented and a centralized packing system is implemented. None of the information disclosed by Saka et al. provides the enhanced processing automation as recited in amended claim 1. While Saka et al. is not related to semiconductor processing, Saka et al. do not teach for any type of product the generation and transmission of the recited second data to modify a lithography mask by changing exposure properties of the lithography mask. Saka et al. do not tech for any type of product the removal of a lithography mask from further processing. Saka et al. do not teach using the recited generated second data to test and measure properties of any type of product, including a lithography mask. At Col. 9, lines 32-65, Saka et al. teach monitoring the progress of processes including which units are under test and which units have been tested. Once tested, detailed defect data is registered and information pertaining to a faulty machine provided. In contrast, amended claim 1 recites generation of second data "for testing and measuring properties of said lithography mask". The second data provides information for actual testing, as opposed to being data regarding the status of what product passed or failed a test. The second data permits enhanced testing and test functionality by avoiding test information from being required to be processed by a host or otherwise input into the system and can be test data specific to various stages of use for the lithography mask.

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Newly presented claim 25 recites a system similar to claim 1 where the use of the recited second data is "to modify said lithography mask by changing exposure properties of the lithography mask at the second station". Applicants therefore submit that the comments provided above apply equally to the art relied upon and the art made of record, but not relied upon.

Applicants respectfully submit that none of Bonora et al., Maney et al. or Saka et al. teach, alone or in combination, the method as recited in independent claims 1 and 25. Applicants therefore request entrance of this amendment and the allowance of the application. Should issues remain that might be subject to resolution through a telephonic interview, a telephone call to the undersigned at (512) 996-6839 is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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